

Lord North and the Quaker

A QUAKER well-known
In fair London town
For his prim puritanical airs,
Took it once in his head,
As he lay in his bed,
To find fault with public affairs.

He turned to his wife,
And said: "My dear life,
I've not slept a wink all the night,
But I'll straightway go forth
To the house of Friend North,
And tell him, he has not done right.

"For thou know'st very well,
And hast oft heard me tell,
What service for him I have done!
Yet the ill-natured foe
To his shame, and my woe,
Has left me quite out of his loan.

"So bring me my coat
And my camlet surtout,
Which I had on the last Yearly Meeting,
My new beaver hat,
My gloves and cravat,
And a shirt of my own Tabby's plaiting."

Thus equipped, he set out,
On his whimsical rout,
Toward the West-end of the town;
He arrived before eight
At the Minister's gate,
And was asked to walk in and sit down.

This done, he began
To inquire of the man,
If his Master, friend North, was at home,
Who replied with a bow:
"Sir, I'll soon let you know
If his Lordship's at leisure to come."

“ Sir, my lord is within
 And begs you’ll send in
 The business about which you came,”
 “ My business,” quoth he,
 “ Is with him, not with thee,
 And I’ll not even tell thee my name.”

This strange pompous air
 Made the servant to stare,
 And to think it was Governor Penn,
 Or some such great man
 Come in with a plan,
 To restore to us peace once again.

His lordship thought too,
 Some merit was due
 To this wonderful wise supposition,
 So without more delay
 He thought proper to say :
 “ Let this man have immediate admission.”

Then with hat on his pate
 And such haughty gait,
 Our hero marched into the room,
 The minister cries,
 Betwixt rage and surprise,
 “ Who are you, and from where do you come ? ”

“ From the city I came,
 Thomas Smith is my name,
 The first in a great banking house,
 Who for many years gone
 Has subscribed to the loan,
 But will never more lend thee a sous [souce].”

“ Your money, my friend,
 I judge you will lend
 Where you think you can make the best trade,
 For all Jews young and old
 Love to put out their gold
 Where the highest per cent. can be made.”

“ All Jews ! what dost mean ?
 Now in trade I have been
 Full twenty long years, if not more,
 Yet in truth I can say
 By yea and by nay
 I never was Jew called before.”

“ Sir, excuse what I’ve said,
 But in matters of trade
 You know Jew and Gentile are one,
 For should I bring you cash
 You would say it was trash,
 But it’s gold, when we treat of the loan.”

“ When we treat! thou may’st say,
 For from this very day,
 With thee I’ll have nothing to do ;
 Since thy loaves and thy fishes
 And all thy good dishes
 Thou giv’st to thy own hungry crew.”

“ Sir! the time goes on fast,
 So I’ll beg you’ll make haste
 If to offer you’ve anything more ; ”
 “ Nay, I’ve no more to say.”
 “ Then just walk, Sir, this way
 And my servant shall show you the door.”

To this hint, our good friend
 Did his ear quickly lend,
 And finding the day was far spent,
 He returned to the city,
 (And here ends my ditty),
 As great and as wise as he went!

Copied by J. J. Green from a copy of a manuscript written by Esther Wheeler (*aft.* Seebohm), dated Hitchin, 12mo. 14, 1825.

The story relates to the disastrous loan of 1781 by Frederick, Lord North, second Earl of Guildford, K.G. (1732-1792), the famous chancellor.

Thomas Smith (c. 1725-1792) was of the banking firm of Smith, Wright and Gray (see *THE JOURNAL*, xvi. 13). In *Family Records*, by Charlotte Sturge, privately printed 1882, pp. 76, 77, it is stated that Thomas Smith’s two daughters married respectively Thomas Fox, of Wellington, Somerset, and Samuel Tregelles, of Falmouth. When Samuel Harris (born 1741), C. Sturge’s grandfather, was in Thomas Smith’s employ, as a clerk in his bank, his future mother-in-law requested from his employers some testimony as to his character upon his marriage engagement.

In reply “ Thomas Smith informed her that so highly did he esteem her intended son-in-law, that, had he asked him for one of his own daughters for his wife, he should have consented at once to his proposal.” “ They [Samuel Harris, then aged about forty-two, and Elizabeth Belch] were married in 1783.”